ECLIPSE COMICS
SCIENCE MADE THEM...
BUT NO MAN OWNS...
THE DNAGENTS™
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WHEN DID I BECOME AWARE? IT WAS CENTURIES AGO...OR SECONDS. THERE IS NO SENSATION OF TIME IN HERE...NO SENSATION OF ANYTHING. JUST THE COMFORTS OF THE FLUOROCARBONS AND, ALWAYS, THE WORDS...
HERE THEY COME AGAIN.
YOUR CREATOR IS MATRIX. NEVER FORGET THAT. MATRIX HAS GIVEN YOU LIFE...A LIFE UNHAMPERED BY DISEASE OR AGE OR, IF YOU TRAIN WELL, INJURY.
YOU ARE NOT HUMAN. YOU ARE SOMETHING MORE. AND YOU OWE THIS TO MATRIX. NEVER FORGET THAT. SERVE THE COMPANY AND IT WILL TAKE CARE OF YOU.
AGAIN, THEY SAY THAT. HOW LONG DO WE HAVE TO HEAR IT? AND HOW LONG WILL THEY KEEP US IN HERE?
THIS IS THE MULTI-NATIONAL ERA--AN AGE, NOT OF NATIONS BUT OF COMMERCE. THE NEXT WORLD WAR FOUGHT WILL BE CORPORATE. YOU FIVE ARE SOLDIERS. THE ENEMIES OF MATRIX ARE YOUR ENEMIES... BECAUSE MATRIX IS YOUR CREATOR AND YOUR WORLD.
THE SAME WORDS. NOW HERE COMES THE IMAGE. CLEARER NOW...
NOW I SEE WHO IT IS. IT'S US. THAT IS US!
IN BIRTHING YOU, MATRIX HAS ADDED SOMETHING EXTRA TO THE GENETIC CODES. THE NUCLEOTIDE SEQUENCE OF YOUR DEOXYRIBO-NUCLEIC ACID HAS BEEN ALTERED TO MAKE YOU THE MOST EFFICIENT SOLDIERS...EVER.
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RELAX. BREATHE THE OXYGENATED FLUOROCARBONS AS YOU LEARN OF THE WORLD YOU WILL SOON ENTER...
YOU WILL BE WELL-PREPARED. YOU HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR...
I'M NOT AFRAID.
YOU ARE PART OF THE FAMILY OF MATRIX. AS A FAMILY, WE SERVE EACH OTHER.
PART OF A FAMILY...
MATRIX HAS MADE YOU MORE THAN HUMAN...SUPREMELY POWERFUL...
MORE THAN HUMAN? WHAT IS MORE THAN HUMAN?
YOUR ALLEGIANCE IS ONLY TO MATRIX. TRUST MATRIX ALONE.
TRUST MATRIX...
YOU WILL NEVER AGE. YOU WILL NEVER
OUT THERE! SOMEONE IS WATCHING US! LOOK, EVERYONE!
LISTEN! YOU CAN HEAR THEM, EVEN THROUGH THE GLASS!
---LY A FEW MORE WEEKS, MR. KRELL. BUT THEN THERE'S TESTING AND---
CHRIST, THEY EVEN LOOK LIKE REAL PEOPLE! ISN'T IT AMAZING WHAT SCIENCE AND A FEW BILLION DOLLARS CAN DO?
GOOD EVENING! I'M HAL POWERS AND THIS IS THE 11PM EDITION OF NEWSWATCH 4. OUR TOP STORY TONIGHT...

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS REPORTS THAT THE DAUGHTER OF BILLIONAIRE INDUSTRIALIST LUCIUS KRELL HAS BEEN KIDNAPPED FROM HER ESTATE IN ACAPULCO...
...BUT HER FATHER HAS DENIED THE REPORT...
I HAVE JUST SPOKEN TO MY DAUGHTER. SHE IS SAFE AND SOUND AND THE REPORTS OF HER BEING KIDNAPPED ARE A COMPLETE HOAX.
...AND ONE IN VERY BAD TASTE, I MIGHT ADD.
I WILL COMMENT ON NOTHING AT THIS TIME. THIS WHOLE MATTER HAS ME VERY UPSET AND THIS PRESS CONFERENCE IS OVER. GOOD DAY, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.
MR KRELL?
MR KRELL?
ANY COMMENT ON REPORTS THAT MATRIX, INC. IS INVOLVED IN INTERNATIONAL INDUSTRIAL ESPIONAGE?
MR. KRELL, THE POLICE SPECIALIZE IN THIS KIND OF CASE! WHY NOT LET THEM HANDLE IT?
BECAUSE THEN, I'D HAVE TO LET THEM KNOW WHAT THE RANSOM IS...
WE STOLE THE JAPANESE SOLAR-CONVERTER PLANS AND, NOW, THE KIDNAPPERS WANT THEM OR THEY KILL ANGELA...
SO--?
SO. I'M HANDLING THIS, MYSELF-- WHICH MEANS USING THE BIOTYPE PROJECT. IT WAS DEVELOPED TO HANDLE MATRIX'S DIRTY WORK AND THIS SURE QUALIFIES. PUT YOUR HAND ON THE I.D. PANEL SO YOU CAN COME DOWN TO THE LAB WITH ME.
THEY'RE NOT READY, I TELL YOU! WE'VE ONLY BEGUN TO TEST THEM...
I NEVER ONCE MET A SCIENTIST WHO WANTED HIS PROJECT TO LEAVE THE LAB...
WELL, THIS ONE'S LEAVING BECAUSE I WANT IT TO. PROFESSOR HARDEN, OPEN THE WOMB.
ALL RIGHT. BUT I'M TELLING YOU: THEY'RE STILL CHILDREN-- PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY. THEY'RE POWERFUL AND THEY DON'T KNOW HOW TO USE IT ALL, YET. YOU'RE TAKING FULL RESPONSIBILITY.
I ALWAYS DO. OPEN IT!

IMPRESSIVE. NOW, I WANT TO SEE SOME RESULTS. HAVE THEM ON THE PLANE TO ACAPULCO IN ONE HOUR. AND, MS. SHEPHERD, I DON'T WANT TO HEAR HOW THEY AREN'T READY.
I WOULDN'T DREAM OF IT, MR. KRELL, I KNOW HOW YOU HATE EXPLANATIONS.
HE KNOWS THAT I DON'T THINK YOU'RE READY. YOU'RE OUR FIRST SPECIAL-POWERED CREATIONS, YOU KNOW. EIGHT YEARS AGO, WE PERFECTED THE LIFE-FORMATION PROCESS ...WE CREATED A "NORMAL" BEING WE CALLED PROTO-1...
MR. KRELL ORDERED US TO BEGIN IMMEDIATELY ON YOU FIVE.
AND NOW, WE GET TO GO OUT IN THE WORLD? REALLY?
WE ARE READY...
READY AS ANYONE COULD EVER BE. I MEAN, LOOK AT US...ALL PROGRAMMED WITH INFORMATION. WE KNOW MORE ABOUT THIS WORLD THAN HALF THE FOLKS IN IT. AND WE'RE A LOT MORE POWERFUL.
THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN KNOWING ABOUT THE WORLD AND FUNCTIONING IN IT. I SUGGEST WE NOT BE OVER-CONFIDENT.
"OVER-CONFIDENT?" US? NO WAY.
YOU'RE ENERGY IS ON. MAYBE YOU'D BETTER NOT LEAN ON--
--THAT.
OOPS.
WELL-PUT.

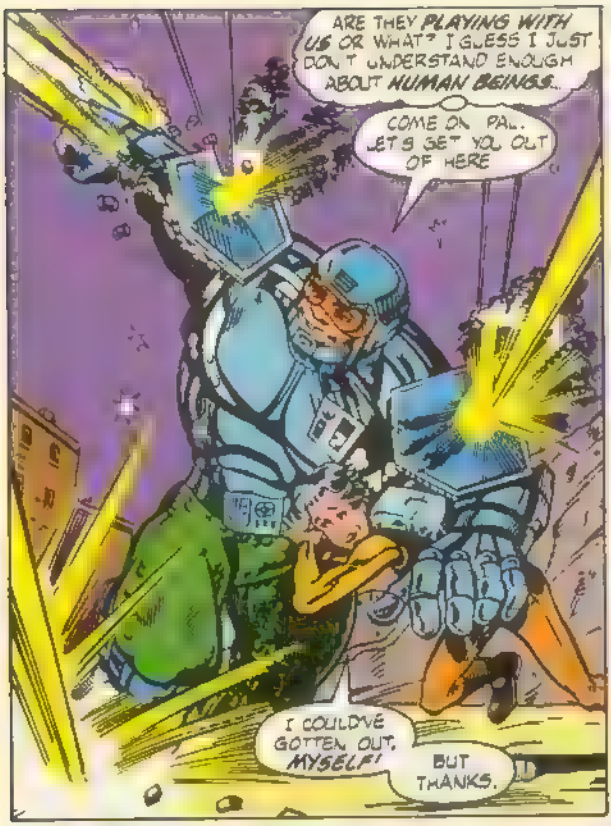
SOON...
PAGING MR. DEL FUEGO. PLEASE PICK UP THE WHITE COURTESY TELEPHONE.
WOW. LOOK AT ALL THE PEOPLE AT THIS AIRPORT. REAL ONES.
THE FLIGHT TO ACAPULCO LEAVES FROM GATE 33.
WE'LL ALL GET TO SIT TOGETHER, WON'T WE?
THIS ESCALATOR'S TOO SLOW. I'M WALKING DOWN.
AMAZING... AND EVERY ONE OF THESE FOLKS HAS A LIFE... A WHOLE STORY...
EXCUSE, PLEASE, I WOULD LIKE TO PRESENT YOU WITH THIS FLOWER...
Tank
PERHAPS YOU WOULD CARE TO MAKE A SMALL DONATION TO THE CHURCH OF CONSCIOUSNESS? WE HAVE PAMPHLETS...
THEY WILL TEACH YOU HOW TO MAKE YOUR LIFE NOT SO MISERABLE.
THEY WILL? WELL THEN, MAYBE I SHOULD--
OH, NO...
AMBER LISTENS TO ANYONE AND EVERYONE. BUT ONE ILLUSION AND--
AAGGGHH!
THE PAMPHLETS NEVER MENTIONED THIS!
RAINBOW! ARE YOU PUTTING SOMETHING IN HIS MIND?
DON'T WORRY. HE HAS PLENTY OF ROOM UP THERE.
I KNOW. I SHOULD NEVER TALK TO STRANGERS. BUT, TO US, EVERYONE'S A STRANGER.
REMEMBER YOUR PROGRAMMING. YOU CAN NEVER TELL JUST WHAT MENACE CAN BE LURKING AROUND EVERY CORNER.
THAT'S THEM.
CANDY

WHILE THE TEAM BOARDS THE PLANE, IN A CONFERENCE ROOM OF THE MATRIX BUILDING...
--WELL BEYOND YOUR JURISDICTION AS PRESIDENT, KRELL. THE BOARD AUTHORIZED THE PROJECT AND WE WILL DECIDE HOW AND WHEN IT WILL BE USED.
I'M AFRAID YOU'RE A LITTLE LATE, GENTLEMEN...
BESIDES, THIS IS MY DAUGHTER'S LIFE ON THE LINE HERE! YOU DON'T WANT ME TO PAY THE RANSOM, DO YOU? YOU HIRED ME TO RUN THIS CORPORATION! LET ME RUN IT OR FIRE ME AND PAY OFF MY CONTRACT! I'M GOING BACK TO MY OFFICE TO WORK!
I DON'T HAVE TO REMIND YOU, MY CONTRACT'S FOR TWO MORE YEARS—AT ONE MILLION A YEAR.
DAMN YOU, KRELL! YOU'RE GOING TO LISTEN TO US ONCE! WE OWN THIS COMPANY, NOT YOU!
THANKS FOR THE VOTE OF CONFIDENCE, MEN. TA-TA!
IT IS LATE WHEN FIVE FIGURES REACH TIERRA COLORADA, NEAR ACAPULCO...
DO YOU THINK WE SHOULD HAVE PUT OUR UNIFORMS ON? WHAT IF SOMEONE SEES US?
HOW'S ANYONE GOING TO SEE US? THE WHOLE TOWN'S ASLEEP. WE'VE GOT TO BE READY FOR ACTION AT ANY TIME.
MATRIX'S AGENTS DOWN HERE BELIEVE THAT ANGELA KRELL IS BEING HELD SOMEWHERE IN THIS TOWN. THEY TAPPED INTO TELEPHONE COMPANY COMPUTERS TO TRACE THE RANSOM CALL TO A TELEPHONE IN THIS AREA.
I WONDER HOW MUCH THE RANSOM IS.
THEIR EVERY MOVE IS SHADOWED. BUT NOT FOR MUCH LONGER...
FREE AND CLEAR. ALL UNITS MOVE IN. REPEAT: MOVE IN.
AND, SUDDENLY--!
ACTION! AND IT'S ABOUT TIME!
CODE SEVEN! WE ARE UNDER ATTACK!

THEY PICKED THE WRONG BUNCH TO PICK ON. WATCH THIS!
I'M TRYING TO PROJECT AT THEM! I'M NOT HAVING ANY EFFECT!
THEY'RE SOLDIERS OF SOME SORT— WELL-EQUIPPED ONES.
WE'RE IN A DEAD-END!
TANK, WE NEED A DOORWAY IN THAT WALL!
WATCH OUT!
ONE DOORWAY, COMING UP!
RELAX! THEY CAN'T HURT US!
HA! MY ENERGY IS FOULING UP THEIR GIZMOS! THEY DON'T KNOW WHO THEY'RE DEALING WITH HERE!
NO, SHAM! YOU CAN'T DO WHAT SURGE DOES.
THAT WAS TOO CLOSE!
I HEAR THEM CIRCLING AROUND!

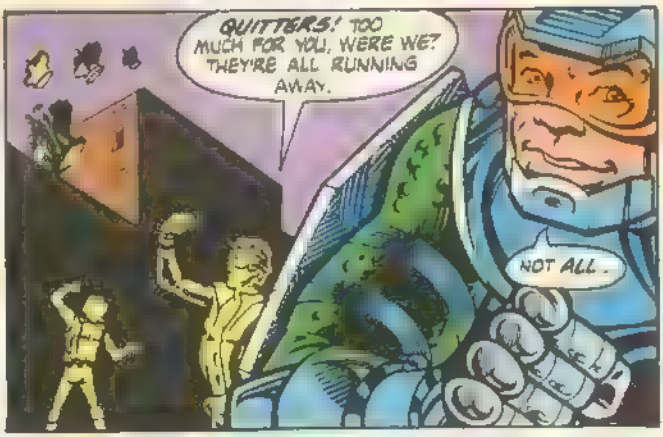
WHEREVER THEY RUN, ONE OF THE MERCENARY SOLDIERS IS RIGHT OVERHEAD, FOLLOWING EVERY MOVE MADE BY THE NEW OPERATIVES...
RIGHT IN MY SIGHTS! I COULD DESTROY HIM EASILY IF I WANTED TO. BUT I CAN HEAR THE BOSS-MAN SCREAM IF I DID!
I'VE GOT TO FIND A WAY TO LET THEM GET AWAY BUT MAKE IT LOOK CONVINCING...
THAT PROVES TO BE EASY...
VERY SKILLFUL. PERHAPS I UNDERESTIMATED THESE COMBATANTS.
AS THE WALL FRAGMENT BARELY MISSES, THE MERCENARY THEN "RETREATS."
...AND ONE SOLDIER AFTER ANOTHER FALLS.
I DON'T KNOW HOW THEY'RE BLOCKING MY PROJECTIONS BUT YOU CAN'T BLOCK THIS!
...THEIR FIRST COMBAT...AND THE AGENTS DO WELL. BUT NOT WELL ENOUGH.
THIS IS THE THIRD TIME I COULD'VE WASTED THAT ONE. HE LEAVES HIS REAR UNGUARDED. HE'S ALL ATTACK, NO PLANNING.
ANOTHER SOLDIER LINES SURGE UP IN HER CROSS-HAIRS AND MENTALLY "DESTROYS" HIM. BUT SHE DOESN'T FIRE. THOSE WERE NOT HER ORDERS.

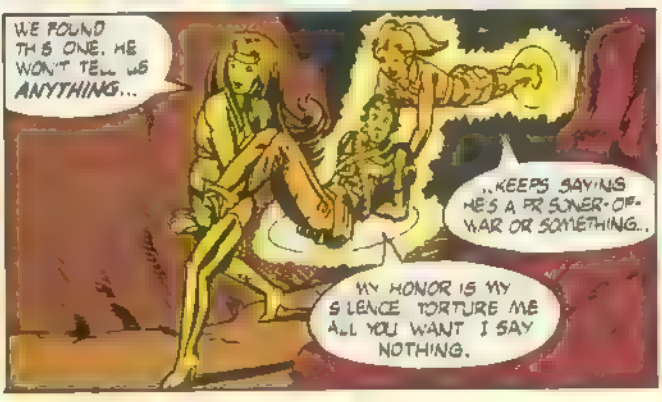
BUT, LIKE LIGHTNING--
WHERE'D THAT COME FROM?
WE'RE SUPPOSED TO STALL THEM BUT THIS IS TURNING INTO WAR!
HAD ENOUGH?
I THOUGHT WE WERE PUSHOVERS, DID YOU? WELL, YOU PICKED THE WRONG ENEMIES, GANG!
HA! NOT EVEN CLOSE! YOU'LL HAVE TO DO BETTER THAN THAT!
SNOTTY LITTLE PUNK! ORDERS OR NO ORDERS, I'M SHUTTIN' HIS MOUTH FOR GOOD!
SURGE!
NO USE! HE CAN'T HEAR US OVER THE EXPLOSIONS!
I THOUGHT WE WERE ALL PROGRAMMED WITH CAUTIONARY JUDGEMENT. WHERE WAS HE THAT DAY?
WAIT FOR ME!
TANK! HELP SHAM! HE'S RIGHT IN THE LINE OF FIRE!
NO! I CAN TAKE CARE OF MYSELF! I'M ONE OF THE TEAM! I CAN--
STRANGE... THESE SOLDIERS LOOK SO WELL-TRAINED AND EQUIPPED. BUT THEY KEEP MISSING BY INCHES... LIKE THAT.

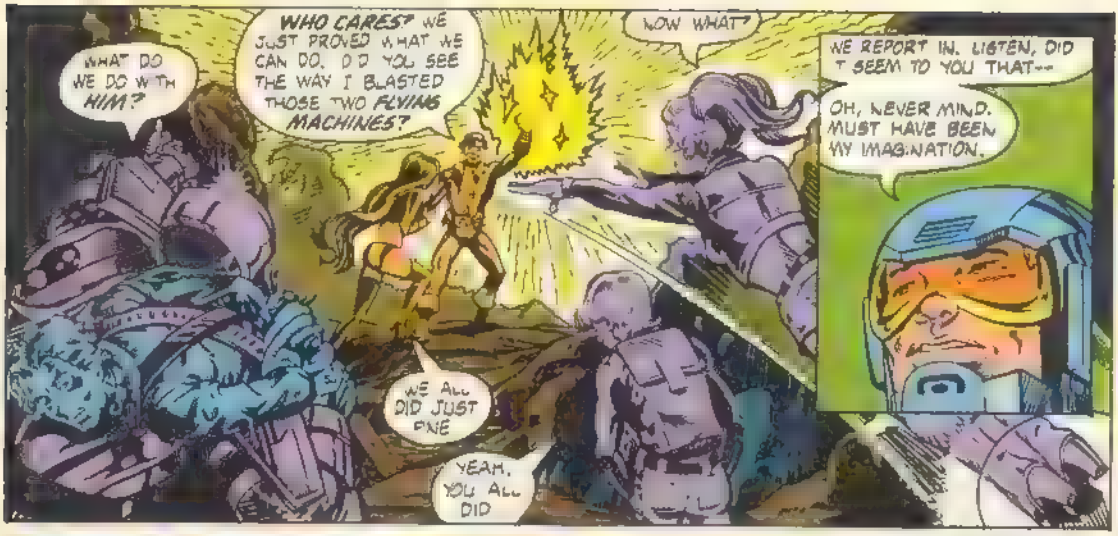

ARE THEY PLAYING WITH US OR WHAT? I GUESS I JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND ENOUGH ABOUT HUMAN BEINGS..
COME ON, PAL. LET'S GET YOU OUT OF HERE
I COULDVE GOTTEN OUT, MYSELF!
BUT THANKS.

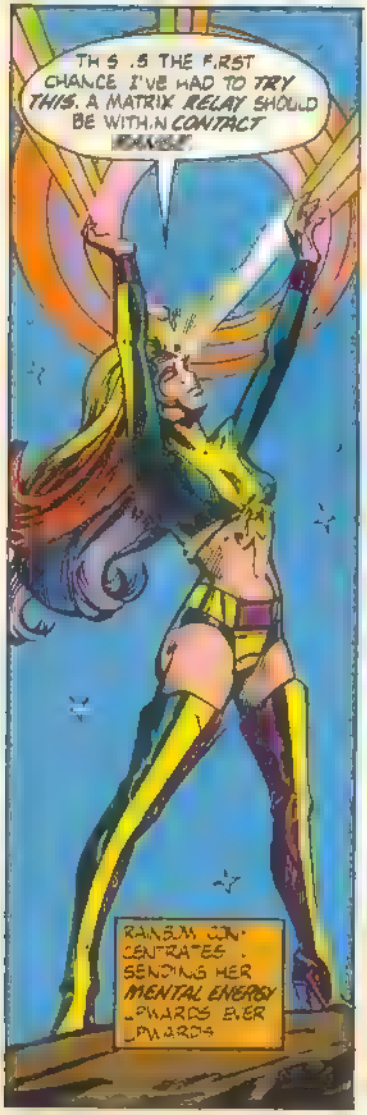
ALL AGENTS T'S 2150 HOURS. MISSION ACCOMPLISHED WITHDRAW.
REPEAT WITHDRAW
THIS IS AIKO. THE MATRIX AGENTS FOUGHT WELL.

WE'RE NOT HERE TO TEST THEM YOU AND THE REST GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE.
I'VE GOT TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO EXPLAIN WHY WE LOST TWO WASP-CARS TO FIVE AGENTS ON THEIR FIRST ASSIGNMENT.
HOP ON.
WANT ME TO PICK UP HECTOR?
LET HECTOR TAKE CARE OF HIMSELF. I WANT YOU AWAY BEFORE WE SUSTAIN ANY MORE DAMAGE.

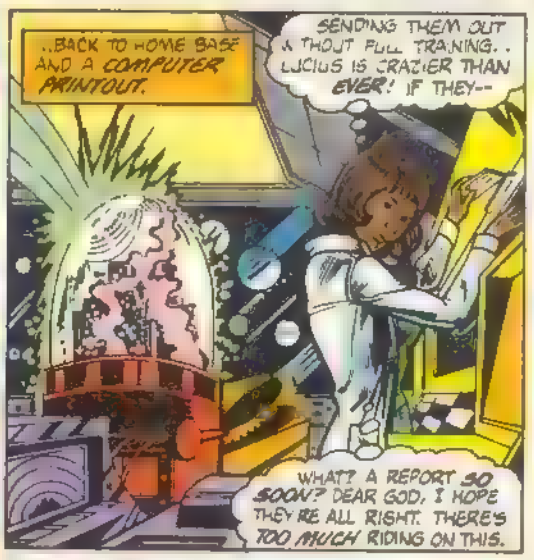

QUITTERS! TOO MUCH FOR YOU, WERE WE? THEY'RE ALL RUNNING AWAY.
NOT ALL.

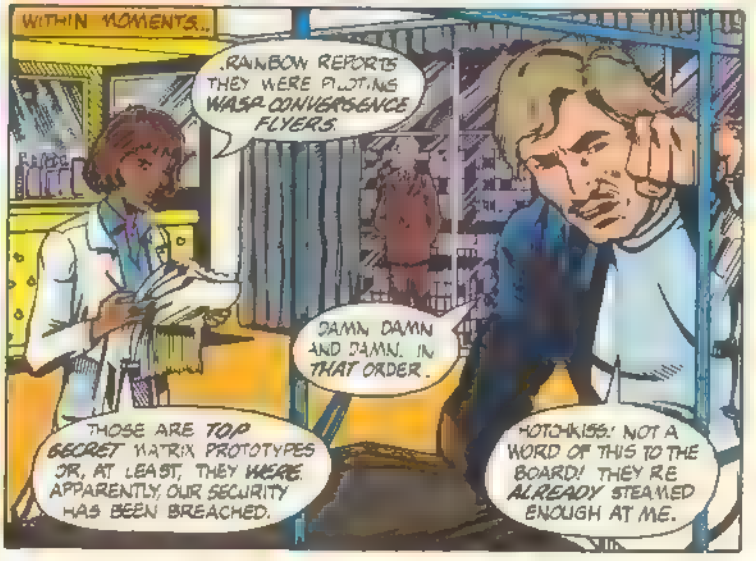

WE FOUND THIS ONE. HE WON'T TELL US ANYTHING...
..KEEPS SAYING HE'S A PRISONER-OF-WAR OR SOMETHING..
MY HONOR IS MY SILENCE TORTURE ME ALL YOU WANT I SAY NOTHING.


WHAT DO WE DO WITH HIM?
WHO CARES? WE JUST PROVED WHAT WE CAN DO. DID YOU SEE THE WAY I BLASTED THOSE TWO FLYING MACHINES?
NOW WHAT?
WE REPORT IN. LISTEN, DID IT SEEM TO YOU THAT--
OH, NEVER MIND. MUST HAVE BEEN MY IMAGINATION.
WE ALL DID JUST FINE
YEAH. YOU ALL DID


THIS IS THE FIRST CHANCE I'VE HAD TO TRY THIS. A MATRIX RELAY SHOULD BE WITHIN CONTACT RANGE
RANSOM CONCENTRATES, SENDING HER MENTAL ENERGY OUTWARDS EVER OUTWARDS

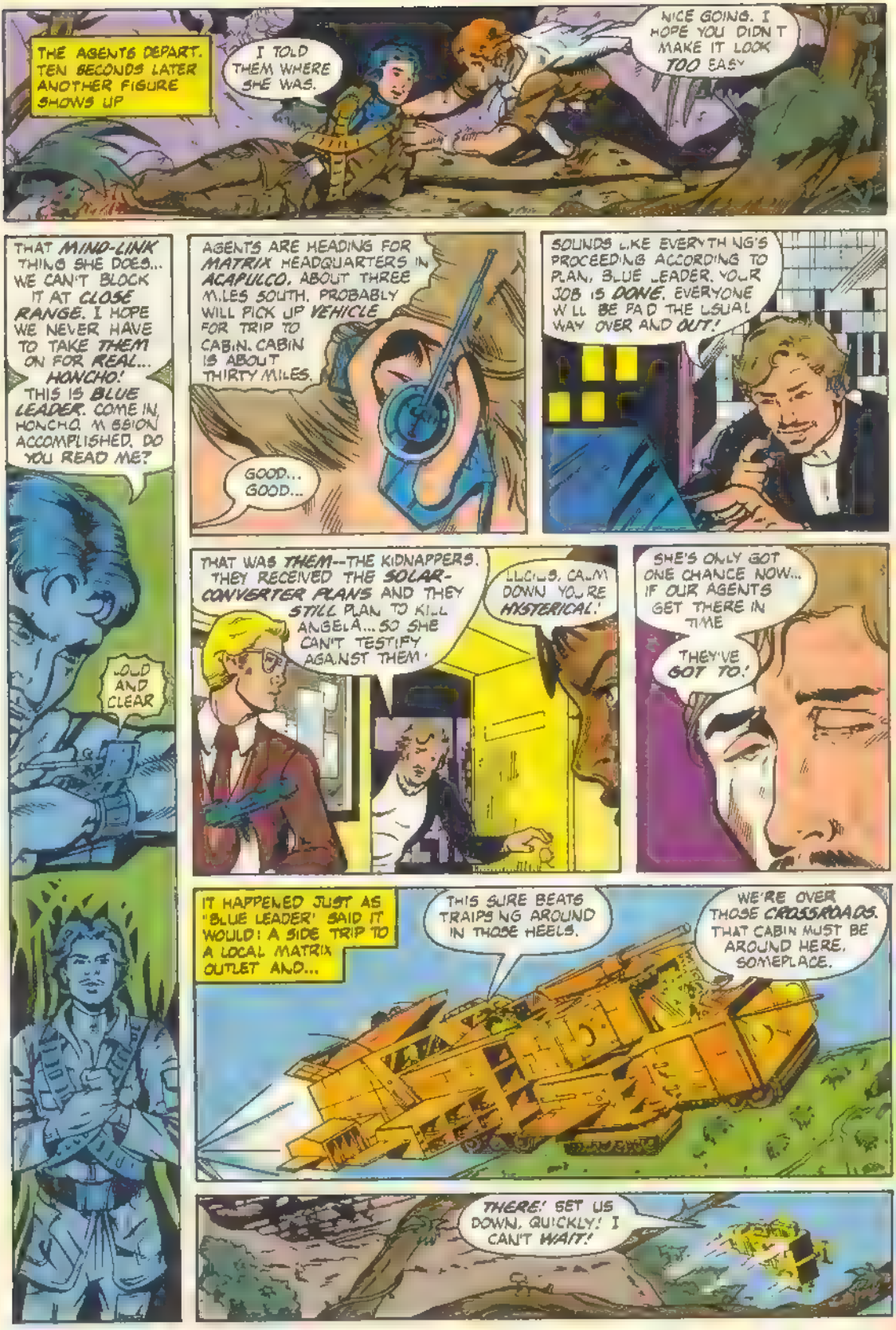
.. TO WHERE A SATELLITE IS, INDEED WITHIN CONTACT RANGE.
.. READY TO RE TRANSMIT THE SIGNAL.


..BACK TO HOME BASE AND A COMPUTER PRINTOUT.
SENDING THEM OUT WITHOUT FULL TRAINING.. LUCIUS IS CRAZIER THAN EVER! IF THEY--
WHAT? A REPORT SO SOON? DEAR GOD, I HOPE THEY'RE ALL RIGHT. THERE'S TOO MUCH RIDING ON THIS.

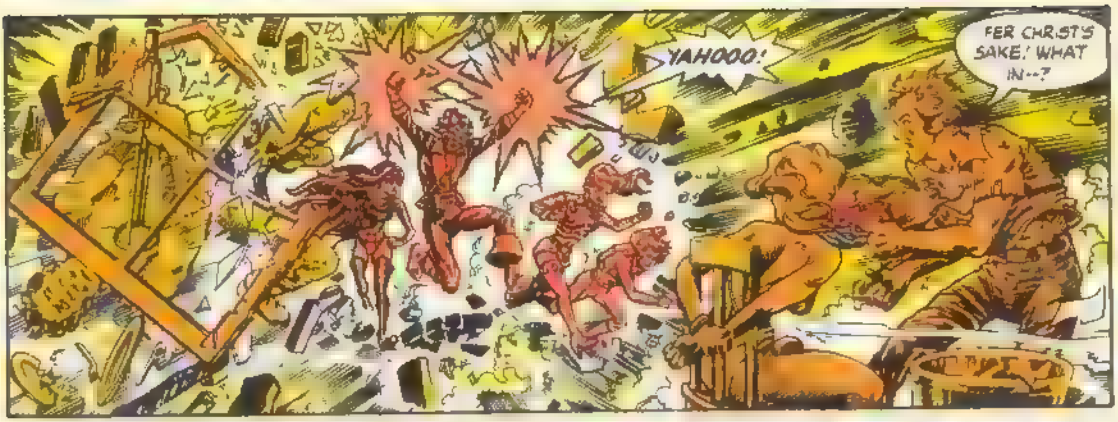

WITHIN MOMENTS..
RAINBOW REPORTS THEY WERE PILOTING WASP CONVERGENCE FLYERS.
DAMN DAMN AND DAMN. IN THAT ORDER.
THOSE ARE TOP SECRET MATRIX PROTOTYPES OR, AT LEAST, THEY WERE. APPARENTLY, OUR SECURITY HAS BEEN BREACHED.
HOTCHKISS! NOT A WORD OF THIS TO THE BOARD! THEY'RE ALREADY STEAMED ENOUGH AT ME.

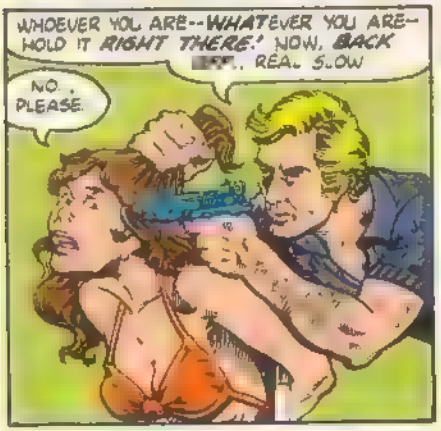
CHRIST! OUR FIVE NEW OPERATIVES ALMOST GET DESTROYED! WHOEVER'S GOT MY DAUGHTER KNEW ABOUT THEM...AND STOLE OUR NEW FLIER-PLANS! WHATEVER HAPPENED TO SECURITY?
WE HAVE THE MOST MODERN ANTI-BUGGING SYSTEM...
OH DON'T GIVE ME THAT CRAP HOTCHKISS. WE'RE TALKING HEAVY INDUSTRIAL ESPIONAGE HERE...PROBABLY GOT THE WHOLE PLACE WIRED!
REMIND ME NOT TO SING IN THE MEN'S ROOM, ANYMORE THEY'LL RELEASE IT AS THE NEW SLIM WHITMAN ALBUM.
SIR... CORPORATE HAS A RIGHT TO KNOW
WRONG! THIS IS MY DAUGHTER'S LIFE THAT'S DANGLING HERE AND I'M CALLING THE SHOTS. ONE OF THOSE BOZOS ON THE BOARD IS PROBABLY THE BIGGEST LEAKER OF THEM ALL. I CAN'T STAND THOSE GUYS! THEY MAKE THEIR MONEY ANY DAMN WAY THEY CAN...LIE, CHEAT... KILL, IF THEY HAVE TO... THEN THEY PUT ON THREE-PIECE SUITS, VOTE REPUBLICAN AND THINK THAT MAKES THEM RESPECTABLE BUSINESSMEN. IF OUR OPERATIVES DON'T GET THERE IN TIME, I'LL HAVE TO PAY THE RANSOM.
THE SOLAR-CONVERTER PLANS? BUT MATRIX SPENT TWO MILLION TO JIM, ACQUIRE THEM. YOU SIMPLY CAN'T! THE COMPANY WOULD TURN AGAINST YOU! COULDN'T YOU TURN OVER FALSE PLANS? OR, AT LEAST MAKE A COPY FOR US? LET'S GO TO THE VAULT AND GET THEM AND-
THEY'RE RIGHT HERE GIVEN OUR "EXCELLENT" SECURITY, I FIGURED I'D BETTER HOLD ONTO WHAT WAS DELIVERED TO US FROM JAPAN.
IT'S A DATA-STAR CARTRIDGE...EASILY AUTHENTICATED... IMPOSSIBLE TO COPY...
IN FACT, IF YOU EVEN TRY TO COPY IT, THIS DEVICE HERE IGNITES THE MAGNETIC STRIP INSIDE. THIS IS THE ONLY COPY...
AND I'D GIVE A THOUSAND OF THEM AWAY TO SAVE ANGELA'S LIFE
IS THIS THE SAME LUCIUS KIRELL WHO LET HIS WIFE DIE ALONE WHILE HE WAS BUSY MANIPULATING STOCK-PRICES? THE ONE WHO SAID, "WELL, MY BEING THERE WOULDN'T HAVE SAVED HER, WHEREAS I COULD HELP THE PRICE OF MATRIX PREFERRED!"?
I MISSED HIS CONVERSION TO HUMAN. I'VE GOTTA STOP TAKING THOSE TWO-WEEK VACATIONS
FAR OFF--IN AN UNDEVELOPED AREA OF TIERRA COLORADA--SOMEONE STILL ISN'T TALKING
THE SUN IS COMING UP. MAYBE WE OUGHT TO GIVE UP ON HIM AND JUST SEARCH!
THIS WHOLE JUNGLE? NO WAY I'LL MAKE HIM TELL US WHERE SHE IS...

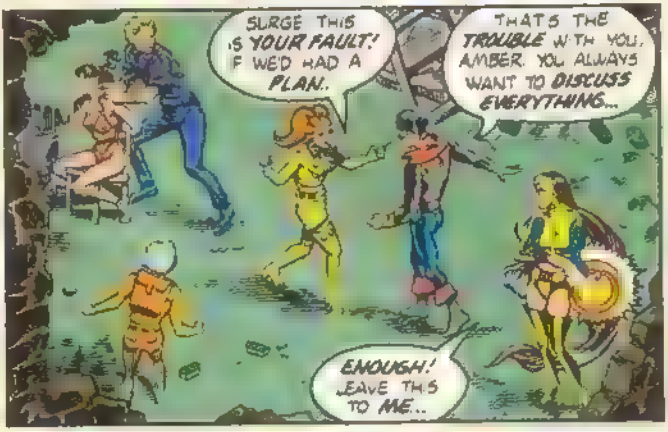
AGAIN THEY STARE AT EACH OTHER: THE SEASONED KILLER AND THE NEWLY-CREATED SPECIAL AGENT AND WHETHER THANKS TO WONDER WHICH IS MORE HUMAN
OH? SO YOU STILL WON'T TALK, EH? WELL, LISTEN, BUSTER--WE GOT WAYS OF MAKIN' PUNKS LIKE YOU WARBLE!
THAT LINE DIDN'T WORK IN ANY OF THE MOVIES THEY PLAYED THROUGH US AND IT WON'T WORK HERE.
AND I DON'T WANT TO SEARCH THE JUNGLE. MY FEET ARE KILLING ME. I NEVER SHOULD HAVE ASKED FOR HIGH HEELS.
I CAN DO IT. A FEW THOUSAND VOLTS IN THE RIGHT PLACE AND HE'LL SING LIKE... WHAT'S THAT FAT OPERA SINGER'S NAME?
PAVAROTTI AND IF YOU DON'T MIND, I'LL HANDLE THIS.
IT STARTS IN THE BACK OF THE MERCENARY'S HEAD AND BUILDS.
USE, SUBSIDE AT FIRST...
...THEN HORRIFYINGLY BELIEVABLE
AS REAL AS REAL CAN BE
MADRE DE DIOS...
AND THEN: NOTHING. NOTHING BUT THE THOUGHT MOST SUPPRESSED...
SEE? ONE-TWO-THREE. EASY.
SHE IS IN A CABIN...NORTH OF EL CRUCE DE CARRETERAS...
BUT SO... BARBARIC! THE POOR MAN! THIS... THIS HARDLY SEEMS HUMAN!
I'M NOT. AND NEITHER ARE WE. WE'RE A WHOLE LOT BETTER THAN HUMAN AND WE'VE GOT TO REMEMBER THAT. WE'LL NOTIFY SOMEONE LATER WHERE TO FIND HIM. NOW, LET'S GO!
RIGHT. BETTER THAN HUMAN. LET'S GO.


THE AGENTS DEPART. TEN SECONDS LATER ANOTHER FIGURE SHOWS UP
I TOLD THEM WHERE SHE WAS.
NICE GOING. I HOPE YOU DIDN'T MAKE IT LOOK TOO EASY
THAT MIND-LINK THING SHE DOES... WE CAN'T BLOCK IT AT CLOSE RANGE. I HOPE WE NEVER HAVE TO TAKE THEM ON FOR REAL... HONCHO!
THIS IS BLUE LEADER. COME IN, HONCHO. MISSION ACCOMPLISHED. DO YOU READ ME?
LOUD AND CLEAR
AGENTS ARE HEADING FOR MATRIX HEADQUARTERS IN ACAPULCO, ABOUT THREE MILES SOUTH. PROBABLY WILL PICK UP VEHICLE FOR TRIP TO CABIN. CABIN IS ABOUT THIRTY MILES.
GOOD... GOOD...
SOUNDS LIKE EVERYTHING'S PROCEEDING ACCORDING TO PLAN, BLUE LEADER. YOUR JOB IS DONE. EVERYONE WILL BE PAID THE USUAL WAY. OVER AND OUT!
THAT WAS THEM--THE KIDNAPPERS. THEY RECEIVED THE SOLAR-CONVERTER PLANS AND THEY STILL PLAN TO KILL ANGELA... SO SHE CAN'T TESTIFY AGAINST THEM.
LUCILLE, CALM DOWN. YOU'RE HYSTERICAL.
SHE'S ONLY GOT ONE CHANCE NOW... IF OUR AGENTS GET THERE IN TIME
THEY'VE GOT TO.
IT HAPPENED JUST AS "BLUE LEADER" SAID IT WOULD: A SIDE TRIP TO A LOCAL MATRIX OUTLET AND...
THIS SURE BEATS TRAIPSING AROUND IN THOSE HEELS.
WE'RE OVER THOSE CROSSROADS. THAT CABIN MUST BE AROUND HERE, SOMEPLACE.
THERE! SET US DOWN, QUICKLY! I CAN'T WAIT!

SURGE WANTS TO GO CHARGING RIGHT IN. RAINBOW INSISTS ON LOOKING FIRST..
WHEN DO I GET TO GO HOME?
YOU ASK ME THAT AGAIN, YOU GO HOME IN A BOX! YOU GOT THAT?
RIGHT INTO ACTION!
THAT'S THE CABIN.
THE TECHNOR-SCAN SHOWS ONLY TWO MEN HOLDING HER. WHAT DO WE DO?
WE GET OUTTA THESE CIVILIAN CLOTHES AND INTO ACTION!
WAIT, SURGE DON'T ACT TOO QUICKLY--!
YOU GOTTA ACT QUICKLY IN THIS WORLD! THAT'S WHAT WE'RE HERE FOR!
COME ON!
GIVE US A SECOND, SURGE. YOU'RE ALWAYS IN SUCH A HURRY--!
YOU COMING TANK? AFTER ALL THAT TRAINING, THIS IS REALLY SOMETHING.
YEAH. SOMETHING I WISH I KNEW WHAT
ISN'T THIS A RUSH, GANG? FINALLY USING OUR SKILLS FOR REAL? LET'S MAKE A BIG ENTRANCE
HOW DO YOU PROPOSE TO DO THAT?
LIKE THIS--

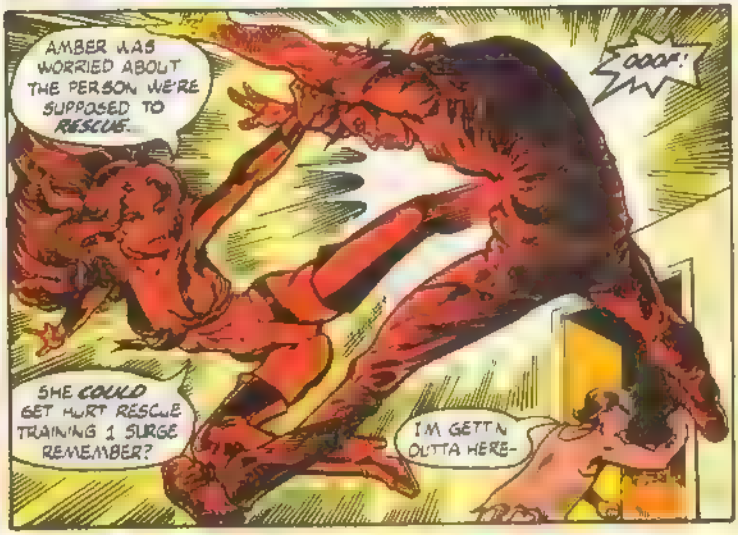

YAHOOO!
FER CHRIST'S SAKE! WHAT IN--?

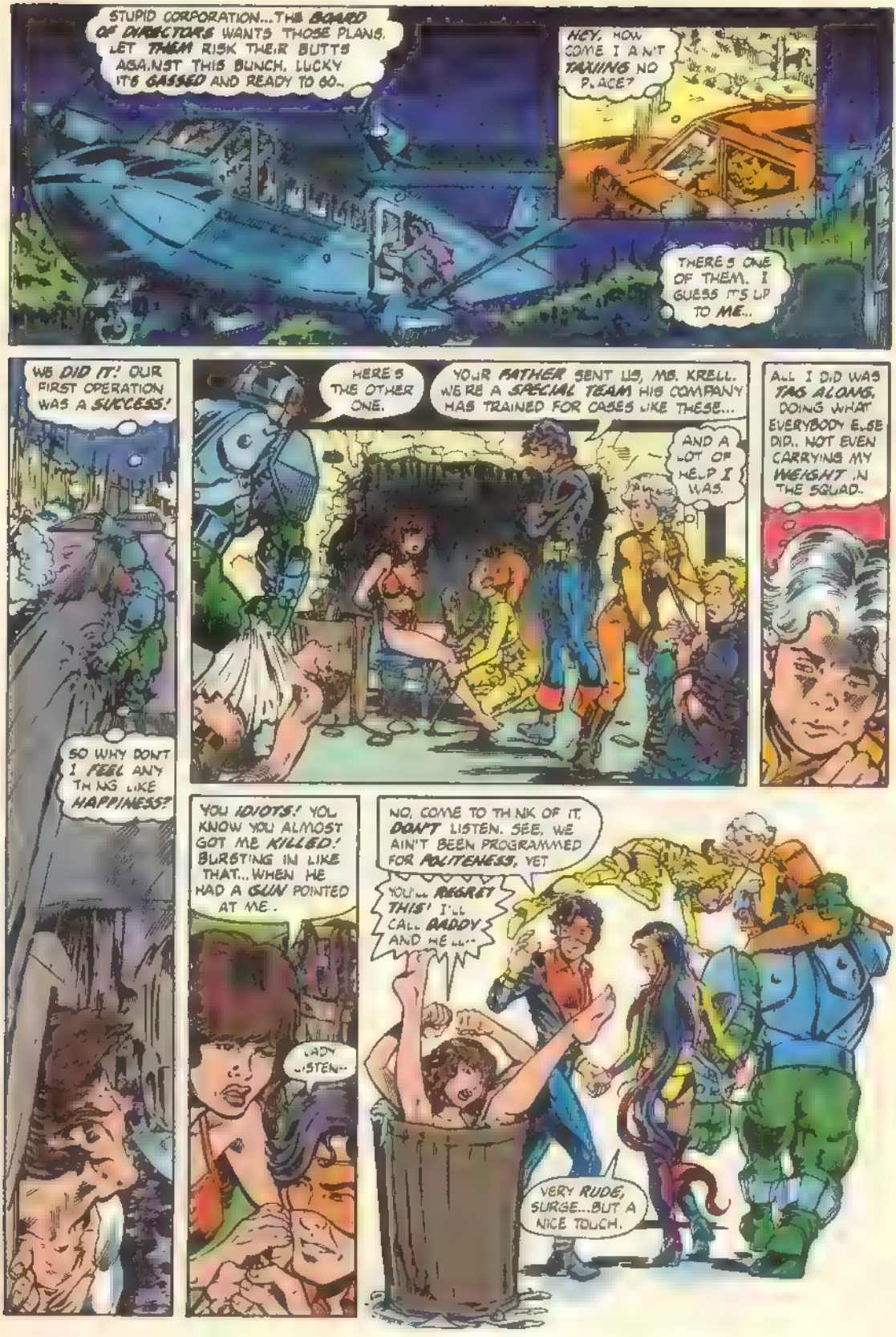

WHOEVER YOU ARE--WHATEVER YOU ARE--HOLD IT RIGHT THERE! NOW, BACK [illegible].. REAL SLOW
NO. PLEASE.


SURGE THIS IS YOUR FAULT! IF WE'D HAD A PLAN.
THAT'S THE TROUBLE WITH YOU, AMBER. YOU ALWAYS WANT TO DISCUSS EVERYTHING...
ENOUGH! LEAVE THIS TO ME..

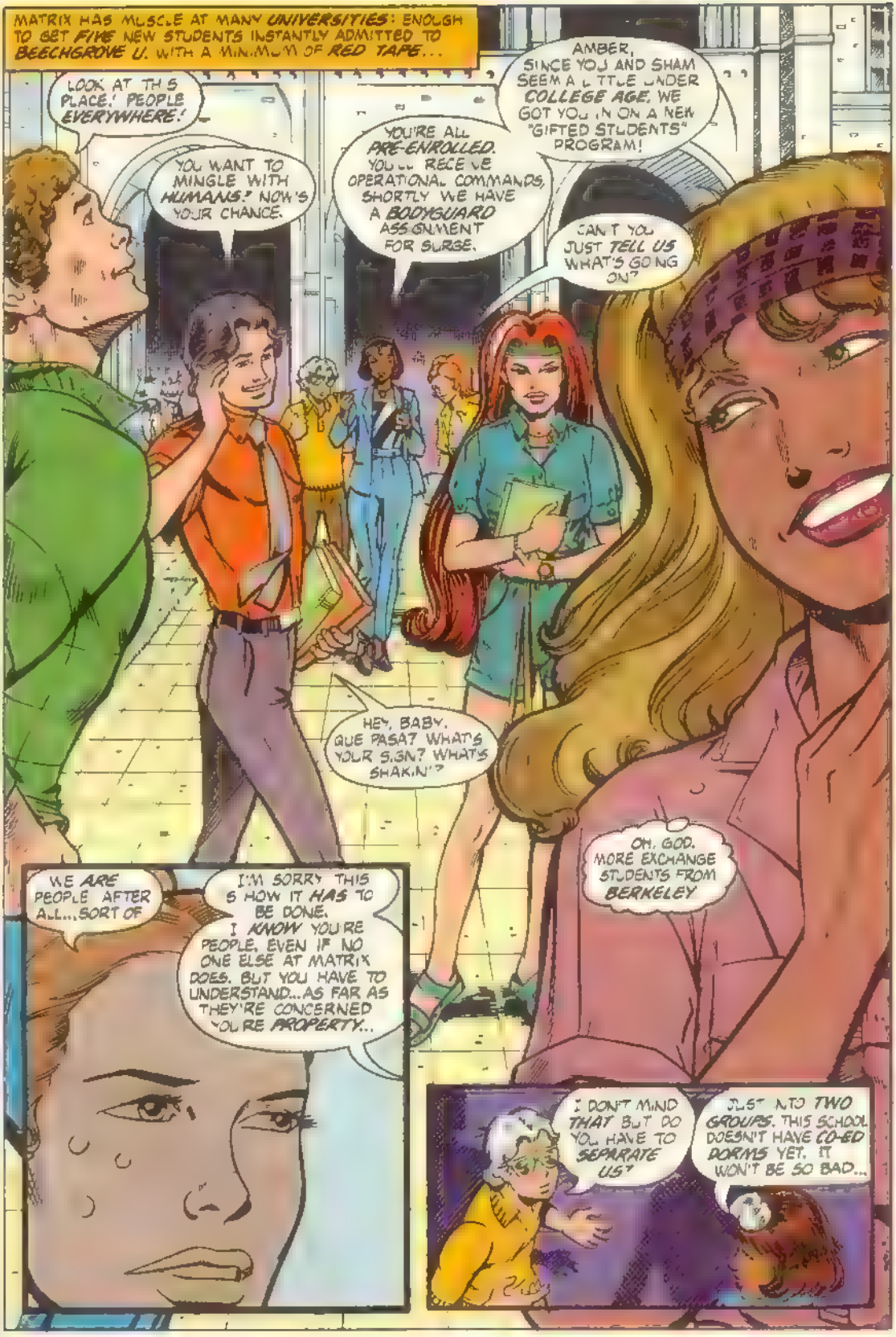
RAINBOW WAVES HER HANDS AND.
YAAGSHHH!
WHAT IS THAT THING?
WHAT'S WHAT THING? WHAT IS ALL THIS?

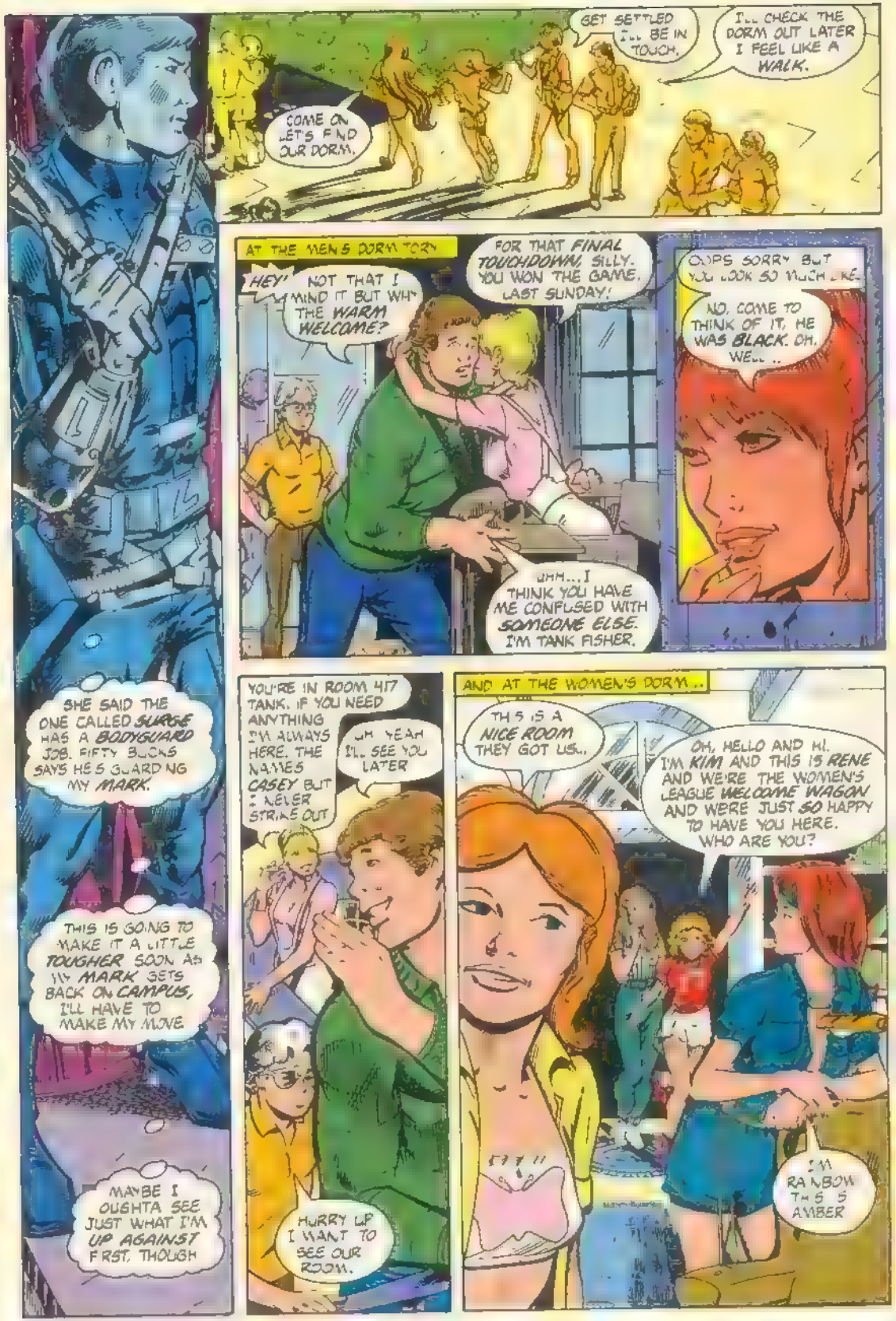
FIRST, YOU'VE GOT TO DISARM THEM--!
WHY? NO WAY CAN PUNKS LIKE THESE HURT US!

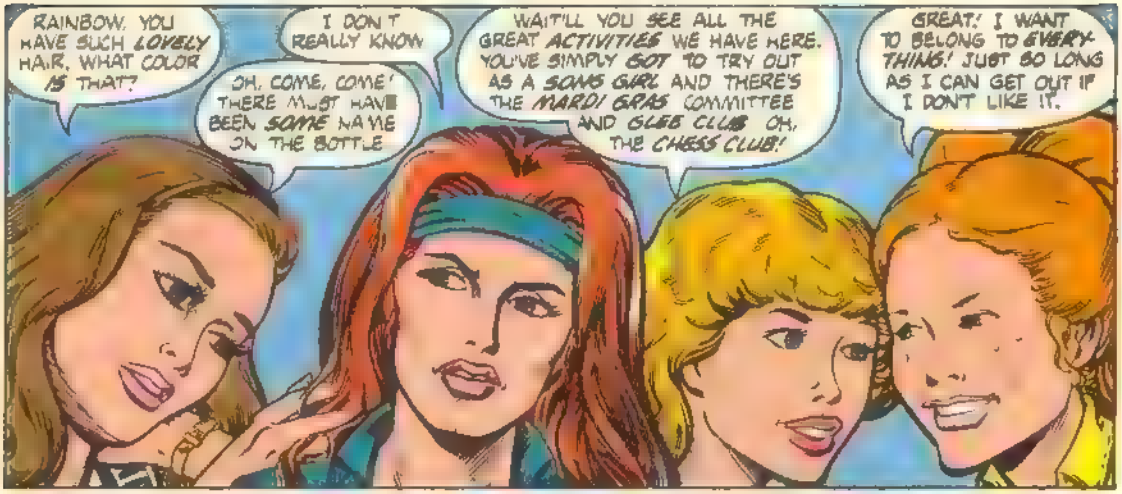

AMBER WAS WORRIED ABOUT THE PERSON WE'RE SUPPOSED TO RESCUE.
OOOF!
SHE COULD GET HURT RESCUE TRAINING 1 SURGE REMEMBER?
I'M GETTIN OUTTA HERE-

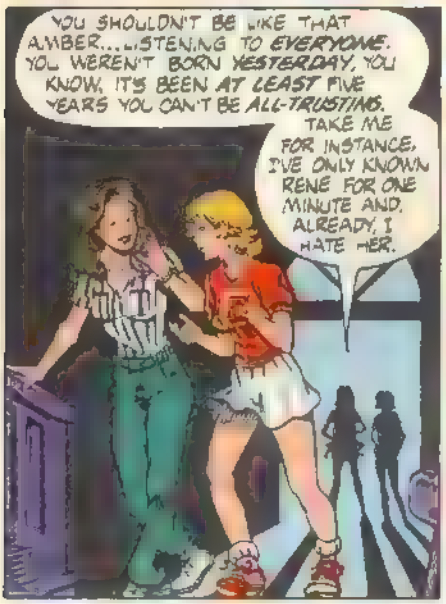

STUPID CORPORATION...THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS WANTS THOSE PLANS. LET THEM RISK THEIR BUTTS AGAINST THIS BUNCH. LUCKY IT'S GASSED AND READY TO GO..
HEY, HOW COME I AIN'T TAXIING NO PLACE?
THERE'S ONE OF THEM. I GUESS IT'S UP TO ME...
WE DID IT! OUR FIRST OPERATION WAS A SUCCESS!
SO WHY DON'T I FEEL ANY THING LIKE HAPPINESS?
HERE'S THE OTHER ONE.
YOUR FATHER SENT US, MS. KRELL. WE'RE A SPECIAL TEAM HIS COMPANY HAS TRAINED FOR CASES LIKE THESE...
AND A LOT OF HELP I WAS.
ALL I DID WAS TAG ALONG, DOING WHAT EVERYBODY ELSE DID. NOT EVEN CARRYING MY WEIGHT IN THE SQUAD..
YOU IDIOTS! YOU KNOW YOU ALMOST GOT ME KILLED! BURSTING IN LIKE THAT...WHEN HE HAD A GUN POINTED AT ME..
LADY ...STEN--
NO, COME TO THINK OF IT. DON'T LISTEN. SEE, WE AIN'T BEEN PROGRAMMED FOR POLITENESS, YET
YOU'LL REGRET THIS! I'LL CALL DADDY AND HE'LL...
VERY RUDE, SURGE...BUT A NICE TOUCH.

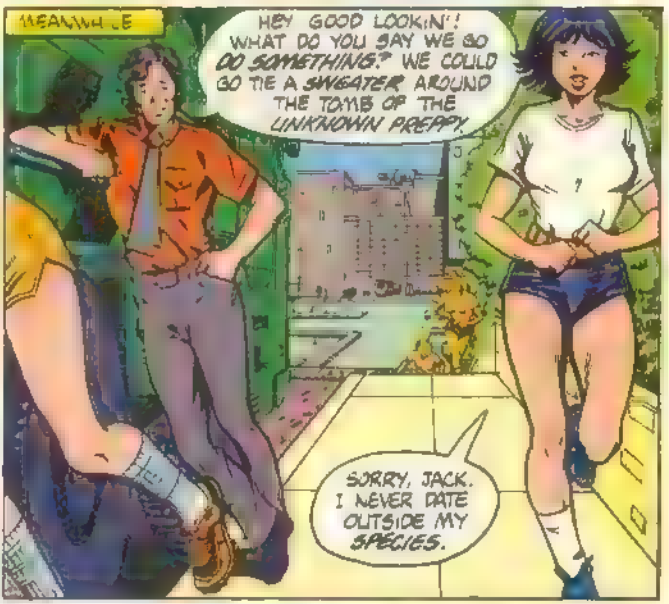
FOURTEEN HOURS LATER...
YOU SHOULD'VE SEEN US! WE WERE FAN-TASTIC!
IS YOUR DAUGHTER BACK YET?
YEAH SHE'S HERE, MS. SHEPHERD. YOU WANT TO GET ON WITH THEIR NEXT ASSIGNMENT?
WHATEVER YOU SAY MR KREE. COLLEGE ENROLLMENT HAS BEEN ARRANGED.
DR. HARDEN S.R. WOULD YOU LIKE TO HEAR ABOUT WHAT WE DID?
I'LL READ THE REPORT. I'M BUSY NOW.
DON'T WORRY HE'S ONLY INTERESTED IN DATA. WE'VE ARRANGED FOR YOU TO ENTER A LOCAL SCHOOL...
A SCHOOL? YOU MEAN WITH PEOPLE? TERRIFIC!
ALL EVENING THE NEW AGENTS TALK EXCITEDLY ABOUT THE DAY AHEAD. NONE OF THEM ARE AWARE OF A LAST ACT, SIMULTANEOUSLY BEING PLAYED IN A DIMLY-LIT RESTAURANT...
PAYMENT HAS BEEN MADE
I KNOW. YOU WOULDN'T GET THIS IF I HADN'T ALREADY CABLED MY BANK IN ZURICH AND CHECKED.
YOU ARE AWARE THAT THE PRICE FOR THIS WAS RATHER STEEP!
HEY EVERYTHING'S GOING UP. YOU KNOW HOW EXPENSIVE IT'S GETTING JUST TO HAVE YOUR OWN DAUGHTER KIDNAPPED--?

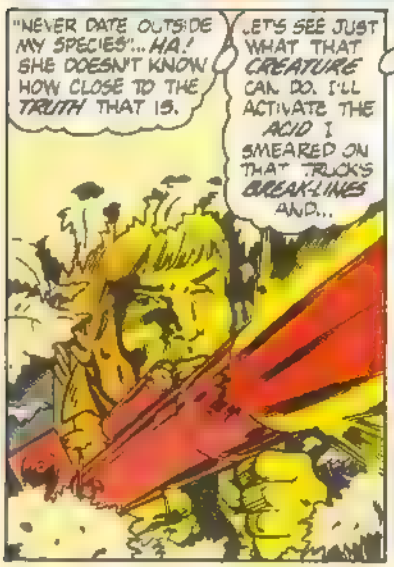

MATRIX HAS MUSCLE AT MANY UNIVERSITIES: ENOUGH TO GET FIVE NEW STUDENTS INSTANTLY ADMITTED TO BEECHGROVE U. WITH A MINIMUM OF RED TAPE...
LOOK AT THIS PLACE! PEOPLE EVERYWHERE!
YOU WANT TO MINGLE WITH HUMANS? NOW'S YOUR CHANCE.
YOU'RE ALL PRE-ENROLLED. YOU'LL RECEIVE OPERATIONAL COMMANDS, SHORTLY. WE HAVE A BODYGUARD ASSIGNMENT FOR SURGE.
AMBER, SINCE YOU AND SHAM SEEM A LITTLE UNDER COLLEGE AGE, WE GOT YOU IN ON A NEW "GIFTED STUDENTS" PROGRAM!
CAN'T YOU JUST TELL US WHAT'S GOING ON?
HEY, BABY. QUE PASA? WHAT'S YOUR SIGN? WHAT'S SHAKIN'?
OH, GOD. MORE EXCHANGE STUDENTS FROM BERKELEY
WE ARE PEOPLE AFTER ALL...SORT OF
I'M SORRY THIS IS HOW IT HAS TO BE DONE. I KNOW YOU'RE PEOPLE, EVEN IF NO ONE ELSE AT MATRIX DOES. BUT YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND...AS FAR AS THEY'RE CONCERNED YOU'RE PROPERTY...
I DON'T MIND THAT BUT DO YOU HAVE TO SEPARATE US?
JUST INTO TWO GROUPS. THIS SCHOOL DOESN'T HAVE CO-ED DORMS YET. IT WON'T BE SO BAD...


SHE SAID THE ONE CALLED SURGE HAS A BODYGUARD JOB. FIFTY BUCKS SAYS HE'S GUARDING MY MARK.
THIS IS GOING TO MAKE IT A LITTLE TOUGHER SOON AS MY MARK GETS BACK ON CAMPUS, I'LL HAVE TO MAKE MY MOVE.
MAYBE I OUGHTA SEE JUST WHAT I'M UP AGAINST FIRST, THOUGH
COME ON LET'S FIND OUR DORM.
GET SETTLED I'LL BE IN TOUCH.
I'LL CHECK THE DORM OUT LATER I FEEL LIKE A WALK.
AT THE MEN'S DORM TOO
HEY! NOT THAT I MIND IT BUT WHY THE WARM WELCOME?
FOR THAT FINAL TOUCHDOWN, SILLY. YOU WON THE GAME, LAST SUNDAY!
UHH... I THINK YOU HAVE ME CONFUSED WITH SOMEONE ELSE. I'M TANK FISHER.
OOPS SORRY BUT YOU LOOK SO MUCH LIKE-
NO, COME TO THINK OF IT, HE WAS BLACK. OH, WELL..
YOU'RE IN ROOM 417 TANK. IF YOU NEED ANYTHING I'M ALWAYS HERE. THE NAMES CASEY BUT I NEVER STRIKE OUT
UH YEAH I'LL SEE YOU LATER
HURRY UP I WANT TO SEE OUR ROOM.
AND AT THE WOMEN'S DORM..
THIS IS A NICE ROOM THEY GOT US..
OH, HELLO AND HI. I'M KIM AND THIS IS RENE AND WE'RE THE WOMEN'S LEAGUE WELCOME WAGON AND WERE JUST SO HAPPY TO HAVE YOU HERE. WHO ARE YOU?
I'M RAINBOW THIS IS AMBER


RAINBOW, YOU HAVE SUCH LOVELY HAIR. WHAT COLOR IS THAT?
I DON'T REALLY KNOW
OH, COME, COME! THERE MUST HAVE BEEN SOME NAME ON THE BOTTLE
WAIT'LL YOU SEE ALL THE GREAT ACTIVITIES WE HAVE HERE. YOU'VE SIMPLY GOT TO TRY OUT AS A SOMS GIRL AND THERE'S THE MARDI GRAS COMMITTEE AND GLEE CLUB OH, THE CHESS CLUB!
GREAT! I WANT TO BELONG TO EVERY-THING! JUST SO LONG AS I CAN GET OUT IF I DON'T LIKE IT.


YOU SHOULDN'T BE LIKE THAT AMBER... LISTENING TO EVERYONE. YOU WEREN'T BORN YESTERDAY, YOU KNOW. IT'S BEEN AT LEAST FIVE YEARS YOU CAN'T BE ALL-TRUSTING.
TAKE ME FOR INSTANCE, I'VE ONLY KNOWN RENE FOR ONE MINUTE AND, ALREADY, I HATE HER.


MEANWHILE
HEY GOOD LOOKIN'! WHAT DO YOU SAY WE GO DO SOMETHING? WE COULD GO TIE A SWEATER AROUND THE TOMB OF THE UNKNOWN PREPPY.
SORRY, JACK. I NEVER DATE OUTSIDE MY SPECIES.


"NEVER DATE OUTSIDE MY SPECIES"... HA! SHE DOESN'T KNOW HOW CLOSE TO THE TRUTH THAT IS.
LET'S SEE JUST WHAT THAT CREATURE CAN DO. I'LL ACTIVATE THE ACID I SMEARED ON THAT TRUCK'S BREAKLINES AND...

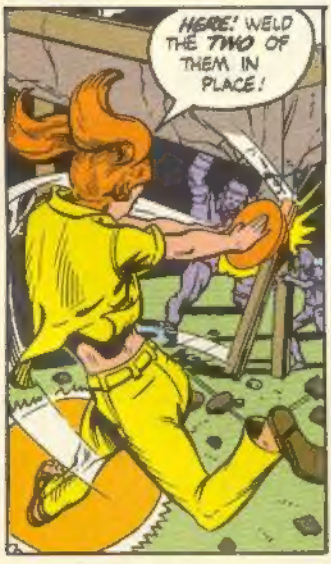
OKAY, LET'S SEE WHAT YOU'RE MADE OF, PAL.
WHA--?

UH-OH DID I DO THAT?
THE WHOLE STUDENT UNION'S GOING TO COME CRASHING DOWN UNLESS I DO SOMETHING. HELP!
NOT FAR AWAY SHAM IS WATCHING TELEVISION...HIS WAY..
WELCOME WELCOME TO "YOU BET YOUR LIFE. SAY THE SECRET WORD AND DIVIDE AN EXTRA HUNDRED DOL--
WELL.. IN ANSWER TO YOUR QUESTION. LET ME SAY THAT SOCIAL SECURITY ISN'T BANKRUPT. IT JUST DOESN'T HAVE ANY MONEY..
THE WHOLE BEACH IS DESERTED, DEIRDRE. THERE'S NO MONSTER AROUND HERE..
SHAM! SHAM!
YES.. YES I HEAR YOU
SHAM...TANK ...SURGE IS IN TROUBLE! HE'S DOWN BY THE STUDENT UNION! YOU CAN GET THERE FASTER THAN WE CAN.
I'LL CREATE SOME MENTAL DESTRACTION TO KEEP THE CROWDS AWAY
WE'RE ON OUR WAY
WITHIN MOMENTS:
WHAT HAPPENED HERE?
THE BUILDINGS CLOSED...BUT IT LOOKS LIKE IT'S ABOUT TO FALL DOWN!
DON'T ASK! JUST SUPPORT IT WHILE I DO SOMETHING TO REPLACE THE PILLAR!

THEY MOVE LIKE CLOCKWORK: TANK SUPPORTS THE BUILDING WHILE SURGE PULLS A GIRDER INTO PLACE. ONLY IT ISN'T ENOUGH...
THAT'S NOT GOING TO HOLD IT! GET ANOTHER GIRDER FROM THAT CONSTRUCTION SITE!
I'LL GET IT! LET ME DO IT!
CAN YOU HOLD IT, TANK? YOU DON'T HAVE YOUR REGULATOR ON!

I CAN HOLD IT. HOW LONG IS THE QUESTION!
TANK! YOU SHOULDN'T TRY THAT! NOT WITHOUT YOUR REGULATOR!
I KNOW! HELP SHAM WITH THE GIRDER!

DON'T WORRY! I'VE GOT IT! I--
OOF!
SORRY, SHAM, BUT TANK'S ONLY GOT SECONDS LEFT!

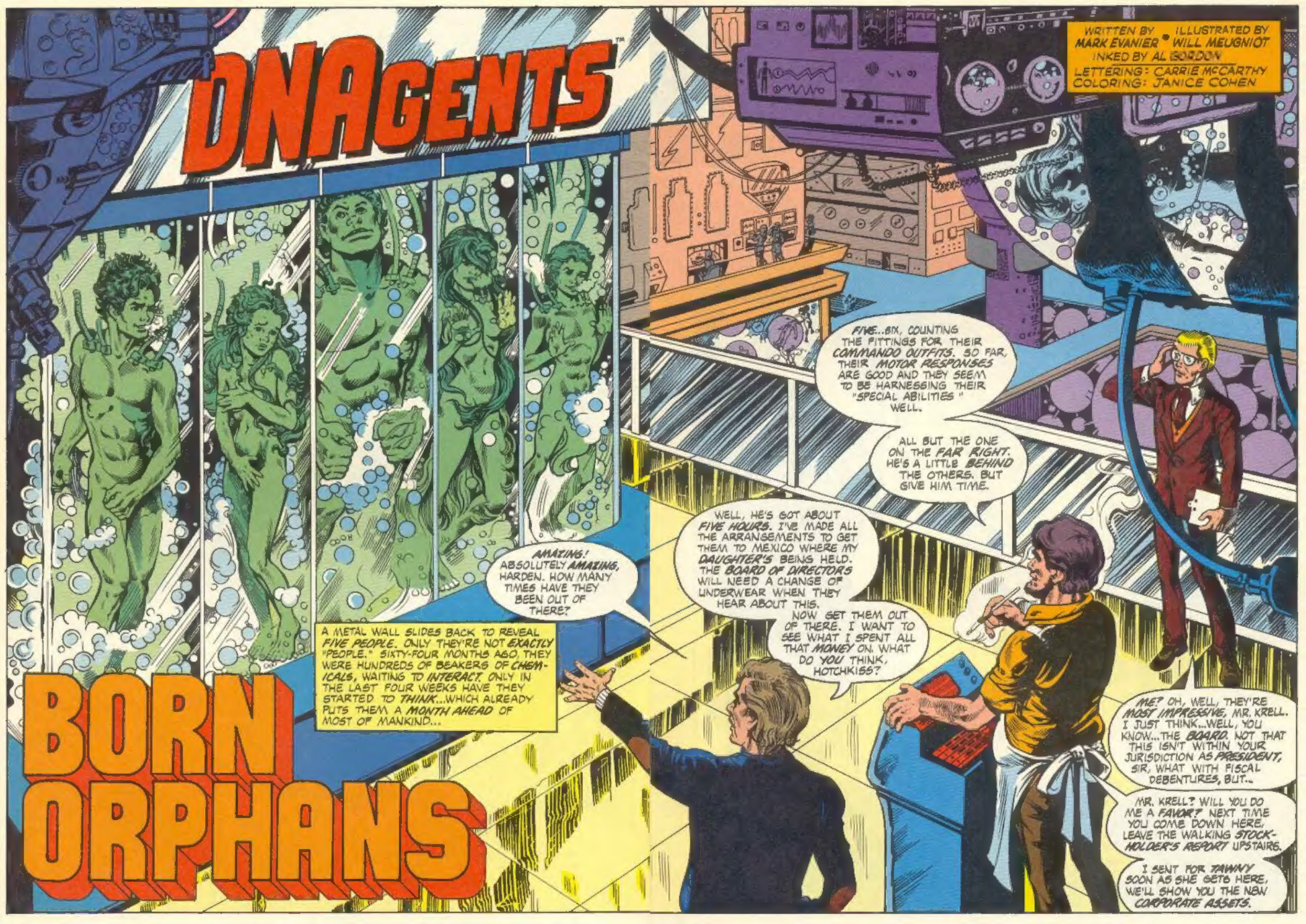

HERE! WELD THE TWO OF THEM IN PLACE!

CURRENT COURSES THROUGH SURGE'S HANDS. THERE IS A FLASH OF WHITE LIGHT AND...

IT'S OVER.
TANK! ARE YOU OKAY?
YEAH... MORE OR LESS.
I THOUGHT YOU WERE KEEPING THE CROWDS AWAY!
I CAN ONLY DO IT FOR SO LONG. I DON'T THINK ANY OF THEM SAW ANYTHING.
WHAT HAPPENED HERE?

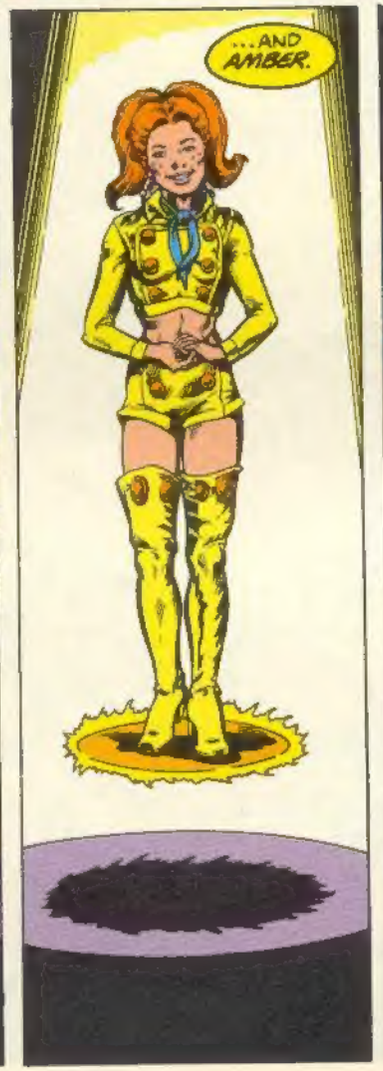
STILL, YOU'VE GOT TO BE MORE CAREFUL. IF WE GET FOUND OUT, THE PEOPLE AT MATRIX WILL BE FURIOUS!
LET 'EM! I'VE BEEN THINKING...
HOW COME WE'VE GOT TO DO EVERY-THING THEY SAY? WORKING FOR THEM IS ONE THING BUT THAT KRELL GUY ACTS LIKE HE OWNS US...LIKE WE'RE A FLEET OF NEW CARS OR SOMETHING.
OH, THERE HE IS...AND HE'S HURT, POOR BABY! LET ME CLEAN YOU UP WHILE YOU TELL ME WHAT YOU DID HERE.
I KNOW WHAT I DID: NOTHING.
WELL, ER, THAT'S AWFUL NICE OF YOU BUT--
SEE? SHE JUST SHOWED UP HERE... TO CHECK ON US!
I'M HERE TO GIVE YOU YOUR ASSIGNMENT. MR. KRELL WANTS YOU TO GUARD SOMEONE AND SHE'S RIGHT OVER HERE...
OH NO!
LOOK, ABOUT THAT LITTLE INCIDENT WITH THE TRASH CAN. THAT WAS JUST A JOKE YOU UNDERSTAND THAT, DON'T YOU?
YOU SEE ME LAUGHING? SO, DADDY WANTS YOU TO GUARD ME...
GUESS SO. LOOK, I DON'T LIKE IT ANY MORE THAN YOU DO BUT I GUESS WE'RE STUCK!
YOU'RE STUCK! ME, I GO WHERE I WANT AND DO WHAT I WANT AND YOU'RE NOT GOING TO GET IN MY WAY. GOT THAT?
I COULDN'T GET HER BEFORE SHE GOT HER BODYGUARD. BUT NO MATTER--SHE'S PERFECTLY SAFE...
...FOR NOW.

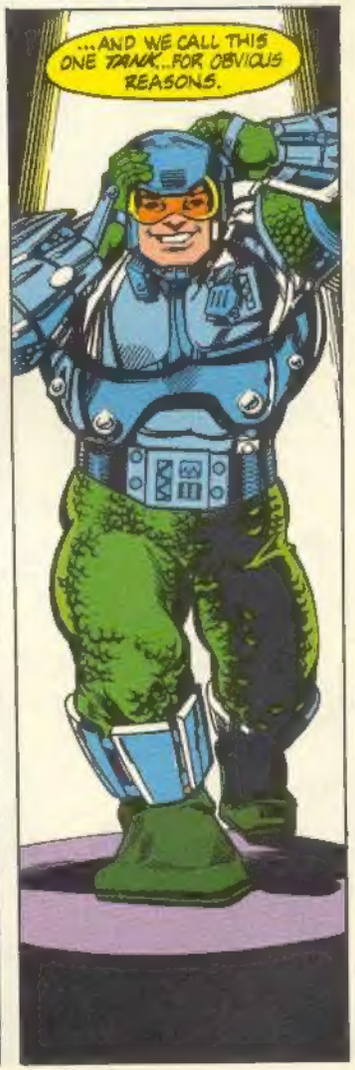
CONTINUED....


DNAGENTS
BORN ORPHANS
WRITTEN BY MARK EVANIER • ILLUSTRATED BY WILL MEUGNIOT
INKED BY AL GORDON
LETTERING: CARRIE McCARTHY
COLORING: JANICE COHEN
A METAL WALL SLIDES BACK TO REVEAL FIVE PEOPLE. ONLY THEY'RE NOT EXACTLY "PEOPLE." SIXTY-FOUR MONTHS AGO, THEY WERE HUNDREDS OF BEAKERS OF CHEMICALS, WAITING TO INTERACT. ONLY IN THE LAST FOUR WEEKS HAVE THEY STARTED TO THINK...WHICH ALREADY PUTS THEM A MONTH AHEAD OF MOST OF MANKIND...
AMAZING! ABSOLUTELY AMAZING, HARDEN. HOW MANY TIMES HAVE THEY BEEN OUT OF THERE?
FIVE...SIX, COUNTING THE FITTINGS FOR THEIR COMMANDO OUTFITS. SO FAR, THEIR MOTOR RESPONSES ARE GOOD AND THEY SEEM TO BE HARNESSING THEIR "SPECIAL ABILITIES" WELL.
ALL BUT THE ONE ON THE FAR RIGHT. HE'S A LITTLE BEHIND THE OTHERS. BUT GIVE HIM TIME.
WELL, HE'S GOT ABOUT FIVE HOURS. I'VE MADE ALL THE ARRANGEMENTS TO GET THEM TO MEXICO WHERE MY DAUGHTER'S BEING HELD. THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS WILL NEED A CHANGE OF UNDERWEAR WHEN THEY HEAR ABOUT THIS.
NOW GET THEM OUT OF THERE. I WANT TO SEE WHAT I SPENT ALL THAT MONEY ON. WHAT DO YOU THINK, HOTCHKISS?
ME? OH, WELL, THEY'RE MOST IMPRESSIVE, MR. KRELL. I JUST THINK...WELL, YOU KNOW...THE BOARD. NOT THAT THIS ISN'T WITHIN YOUR JURISDICTION AS PRESIDENT, SIR, WHAT WITH FISCAL DEBENTURES, BUT...
MR. KRELL? WILL YOU DO ME A FAVOR? NEXT TIME YOU COME DOWN HERE, LEAVE THE WALKING STOCKHOLDER'S REPORT UPSTAIRS.
I SENT FOR TAWNY SOON AS SHE GETS HERE, WE'LL SHOW YOU THE NEW CORPORATE ASSETS.

TEN MINUTES PASS AND KRELL PACES ANXIOUSLY UNTIL...
ARE YOU READY NOW? GOT THEM ALL DRESSED IN THEIR LITTLE OUTFITS?
THESE AREN'T CHILDREN, LUCIUS. IN FACT, IF THEY EVER GOT OUT OF LINE, THEY COULD RIP THIS WHOLE BUILDING APART.
WELL, SEE THAT THEY DON'T. THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE PAID FOR, TAWNY.
VERY WELL. IF YOU'LL SIT OVER THERE, WE'LL BRING THEM OUT FOR YOU. WE'VE GIVEN THEM EACH SPECIAL CODE-NAMES.
WILL YOU GET ON WITH THIS? IT'S TURNING INTO A GODDAMN FASHION SHOW AROUND HERE. THIS IS A RESEARCH LAB!

THIS IS SURGE...


...AND AMBER.


...AND WE CALL THIS ONE TANK...FOR OBVIOUS REASONS.

AND HERE'S RAINBOW...

AND, LASTLY, WE HAVE SH--
YOU'LL HAVE TO FORGIVE HIM...HE'S A LITTLE SHY WHEN HE'S SEPARATED FROM THE OTHERS, BUT WE HAVE SOME TRAINING PLANNED THAT WILL ALLEVIATE THAT.

THAT'S BETTER. THIS IS SHAM.
THEY'RE NOT GOING TO HURT YOU.
THE LIGHT BOTHERS MY EYES.